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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

PUBLICATIONS POLICY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Report of the Secretary-General

INTRODUCTION

1. In section VI of its resolution 46/185 B, entitled "Publications policy", the General Assembly:

(a) Noted that in a number of sections of the proposed programme budget, notably in parts IV, V, VI, VII and VIII, there seemed to be a large number of publications and an unclear distinction between publications requested by intergovernmental bodies and technical publications produced at the initiative of the Secretariat;

(b) Also noted that the quality and relevance of publications appeared to be uneven and that the policies for pricing and distribution of United Nations publications needed to be further refined;

(c) Endorsed the recommendations contained in paragraphs 27 and 32.16 to 32.19 of the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 1/ and emphasized the need for the Secretariat to utilize internal printing facilities better with a view to reducing the overall cost of printing;

(d) Requested the Secretary-General to review the overall publications policy of the Organization, including its technical aspects and possible coordination at the level of the system, and to submit a report to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

2. In a related decision, the General Assembly, in paragraph 4 of its resolution 47/73 B, adopted on the recommendation of the Special Political Committee and of the Committee on Information at its fourteenth session, requested the Secretary-General:

> "To direct the Publications Board to develop criteria and review all publications and proposals for publications to ensure, inter alia, that each publication fulfils an identifiable mandate and need, is timely, does not duplicate other publications inside or outside the United Nations system, and is cost-effective, and that before the publication is printed, it satisfies the criteria on the basis of which it was authorized".

3. At its 1992 substantive session, the Committee on Conferences approved the proposed outline for the study requested in resolution 46/185 B as contained in document A/AC.172/1992/CRP.1. In its report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, 2/ the Committee stressed that the report requested by the Assembly in its resolution 46/185 B, section VI,

> "should be analytical in nature and should present a critical assessment of the publications policies and practices, including identifications of possible duplications, or contradictions between instructions. In addition, the report could elaborate on present or proposed control mechanisms that could assist in evaluating both the impact of publications and the extent to which the publications meet their stated objectives."

4. In accordance with the request of the General Assembly and taking into account the views expressed by the Committee on Conferences and the Committee on Information, a review of the publications policy of the Organization has been carried out under the direction of the Publications Board. The findings and recommendations of that review are given below.

I. PUBLICATIONS POLICY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

A. Definition of publications

5. A United Nations publication has been defined as any written material issued by or for the United Nations under the authority of the Publications Board. Such publications, which are often offered for sale, include major studies, reports, statistical compilations and proceedings of certain conferences, seminars and symposia, as well as serial publications such as yearbooks, official records of the principal organs of the United Nations, the United Nations Treaty Series and technical journals and bulletins. The readership of United Nations publications thus ranges widely, covering, for example, development planners, statisticians, demographers, energy and water specialists and development assistance personnel. Although it is not their primary objective, some publications may also be of interest to the general public.

6. The publications programme for 1990-1991 comprised a total of approximately 1,000 titles annually with print runs ranging from 50 to 9,000 copies; of these, about 400 were sales publications. The publications were classified in the following three major categories:

(a) The official records of the principal organs of the United Nations and other proceedings and reports of conferences, meetings or symposia;

(b) Recurrent publications, such as yearbooks, annual reports, periodicals and numbered monographs or monograph series;

(c) Studies, reports or monographs.

7. In its 1984 report entitled "Publications policy and practice in the United Nations system", 3/ the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), noted that official records, proceedings of conferences, meetings and symposia and texts of conventions, codes and treaties were special to the United Nations system and would not qualify as "books" in the outside publishing world. JIU recommended that such materials be considered "documents" rather than publications, unless they had an identified sales constituency or were reproduced in a form that made them a saleable commodity to an identified readership. The recommendation of JIU, while reflecting correctly the special characteristics of the United Nations publications programme, is considered unduly restrictive; a United Nations publication may be of value to a wide readership yet still more appropriately distributed free of charge than issued as a sales item.

8. With the exception of the Yearbook of the United Nations and the UN Chronicle, unless such materials were specifically proposed for inclusion in the submission to the Publications Board, the publications programme has not included public information materials, documents other than official records produced for, or emanating from, the principal organs of the United Nations or their subsidiary bodies, or reports and studies prepared as part of technical cooperation projects. This will continue to be the general policy.

9. In addition, given the rapid advances in technology, it has become clear that the term "publications" should cover both printed matter (books, pamphlets, brochures, wall charts, posters, etc.) and "non-print" materials, including the reproduction and dissemination of written materials in machine-readable form, such as CD-ROM. Consideration is being given to including such non-print materials in the publications programme of the Organization.

B. Mandate for United Nations publications

10. Publications are included in the programme budget in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, which were approved by the General Assembly in its resolutions 37/234 and 38/227. Under the Rules, legislative mandates for publications are provided by requests and directives to the Secretary-General contained in resolutions and decisions of United Nations intergovernmental bodies; the specificity of such mandates varies among programmes, depending upon the working methods of the legislative bodies concerned, and may in some cases consist of legislation establishing an organizational unit or providing a general mandate for its work. In addition, under the provisions of programme planning rule 103.2, the adoption of the medium-term plan provides a legislative mandate to new activities proposed by the Secretary-General in fulfilment of a general objective of the Organization.

11. Under the programme planning Regulations, legislative mandates are subject to review every five years. Some publications, however, have continuing mandates. The United Nations Treaty Series, for example, is mandated by

Article 102 of the Charter, which provides that every treaty and every international agreement entered into by any Member of the United Nations shall be registered with and published by the Secretariat. The publication of official records is generally provided for in the rules of procedure of the main organs of the United Nations.

12. The review of mandates for publications is an established part of the programme budgeting process and, within the Secretariat, includes a review of all proposals for inclusion in the publications programme of the Organization by an interdepartmental Publications Board of senior officials, established by the Secretary-General, in addition to the review of the programme budget proposals by the Programme Planning and Budget Division. Furthermore, programme budget proposals are often drawn up in consultation with legislative bodies in their respective fields of competence.

13. The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) has the primary responsibility for determining whether proposed programme activities fulfil legislative mandates, as well as for ensuring that programme activities do not duplicate other activities inside or outside the Organization. In its resolution 38/32 E, the General Assembly requested the Committee to review recurrent publications in the context of the medium-term plan or the programme budget. The Assembly also requested that, as appropriate, in the conduct of their reviews of the recurrent publications they authorize for issuance, intergovernmental bodies should bear in mind the following criteria:

(a) Usefulness to the end-user of the publication as gauged from end-user response or from the sales record of a publication;

(b) Filling of a need;

(c) High standard of analysis or data;

(d) Promotion of the principles and purposes of the Organization;

(e) Continued validity of the original mandate;

(f) Recommendations of JIU in its report on publications policy and practice in the United Nations system, if applicable.

14. The regular and systematic review by intergovernmental bodies of the recurrent publications for which they are responsible would serve to ensure that such publications have valid mandates and meet the criteria set out by the General Assembly. The practice of the Statistical Commission might provide an appropriate model for other bodies.

15. In reviewing mandates for publications, the extent to which information provided by United Nations publications is available from other sources should be taken into account. It is not intended that United Nations publications simply reproduce information already widely available to Member States.

1. Criteria

16. The criteria to be applied by the Secretariat in approving materials for publication have been revised on the basis of the review and will be promulgated in an appropriate administrative instruction. In order to be issued as a publication of the United Nations, materials should:

(a) Promote the principles and purposes of the United Nations;

(b) Contribute directly to the achievement of one or more of the programme budget objectives of the subprogramme under which it is prepared;

(c) Be timely;

(d) Respond to an identified demand from a clearly defined target readership;

(e) Reach a standard of intellectual endeavour that reflects credit on the United Nations;

(f) Be prepared in a clear and concise style appropriate to the readership for which the publication is intended;

(g) Not substantially duplicate material that has already been published and is readily available.

There should be a reasonable expectation of positive advantage to the United Nations in terms of greater public awareness of the work of the Organization or of providing practical assistance to the membership of the Organization, such as by the publication of technical manuals or handbooks. The prospect of sales revenue would be a positive, though not a determining factor in the selection of materials for publication.

2. Application of criteria

17. Author departments are assigned the primary responsibility for ensuring that the above criteria are met. To meet their responsibility for ensuring that their publications meet the criteria established by the Publications Board, author departments are encouraged to establish arrangements for the systematic review of their publications, both at the proposal stage and in draft. In addition, the criteria are to be used by author departments in the evaluation of their publications, to ensure that the objectives to be achieved by their publication are met.

18. These criteria are to be applied to all publications as defined above, at successive stages in the preparation of publications from the initial selection of proposals to be included in the publications programme through drafting, editing, and preparation of the final form of the publication. They will also be used as the basis for ex post facto reviews and evaluations of publications by the Publications Board or its subsidiary bodies, by author departments or by other units responsible for programme evaluation.

19. At United Nations Headquarters, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/73 B, the Publications Board is considering ways to introduce new mechanisms (such as a Reading or Selection Committee) and/or procedures to improve the process of reviewing manuscripts to ensure that publications fulfil identifiable mandates and meet the criteria for publication. Whenever appropriate, encouragement would be given to the publication of interdisciplinary works, prepared through cooperation among several departments or offices, including cooperation among several organizations in the United Nations system.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLICATIONS POLICY

A. Role of the Publications Board and its working committee and working groups

20. In accordance with rules 110.38 and 110.39 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, the Secretary-General has established an interdepartmental Publications Board comprising representatives of author departments and processing services. The functions and composition of the Board are at present under review in the context of the restructuring of the Secretariat, but its present functions are as follows:

(a) To determine the policies governing the preparation, production, distribution and sale of documents;

(b) To coordinate the planning and supervise the execution of the publications programme, the preparation of the estimates for contractual printing and the use of funds;

(c) To regulate the use of internal reproduction capacity with a view to ensuring maximum economy and efficiency.

The Board reports to the Secretary-General and makes such recommendations as it deems necessary. It also issues directives and regulations on behalf of the Secretary-General on publication policies and practices. The Board is assisted by a working committee at Headquarters and by working groups at Geneva and Vienna.

B. Role of the Department of Public Information

21. The Department of Public Information is responsible for the creation and preparation of materials designed to provide the media and the general public with current information about the United Nations and its objectives and activities. The Department also has recently been given primary responsibility for the planning and management of the publications programme of the United Nations, using external or internal services as appropriate, and for providing graphic presentation and cartographic services.

C. Role of the Programme Planning and Budget Division

22. The publications programme of the United Nations is an integral part of the programme budget. The Programme Planning and Budget Division provides support to CPC in ensuring adherence to the objectives of the medium-term plan and to the priorities established by the legislative bodies and in monitoring implementation and delivery of the publications programme.

D. Role of author departments

23. Within the Secretariat, the decision on the content and format of a publication is that of the substantive author department or office. Author departments are responsible for the formulation of their own publication programmes on the basis of mandates from the relevant intergovernmental bodies and for the inclusion in the programme budget proposals of provisions for the staff and other resources necessary to prepare the materials to be published. They are also responsible for the substantive content and quality of their manuscripts (or camera-ready page mechanicals, if they use desktop publishing procedures) and for the timely submission of manuscripts for publication. The head of each department or office is also responsible for adherence to the policies and regulations promulgated by the Publications Board.

E. Role of the Office of Conference Services

24. While its primary responsibility is the processing of parliamentary documentation, the Office of Conference Services provides a variety of services related to the processing and distribution of publications, including editing, translation, copy preparation, proofreading, typesetting, reproduction, binding and distribution.

F. Role of the Office of General Services

25. The Office of General Services has recently been given responsibility for arranging for external printing services required for United Nations publications and for the sale of United Nations publications and the operation of the United Nations bookshop in New York.

III. COORDINATION

A. Coordination with other duty stations

26. Coordination with the United Nations Office at Geneva and with the United Nations Office at Vienna is achieved through working groups of the Publications Board established at each of those duty stations and, in the case of the United Nations Office at Geneva, also through the activities of sales offices. Correspondence and occasional exchanges of visits are used to coordinate policies and activities with regional commissions and other offices away from Headquarters.

B. Coordination with other United Nations system organizations

27. The Inter-Agency Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications (IAMLADP) was established to coordinate the publications policies and practices of the organizations of the United Nations system; its organization and operation are now under review as part of the more general review of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and its subsidiary bodies as well as other inter-agency bodies. Meetings of sales officers representing United Nations system organizations at international book fairs also contribute to the coordination of activities relating to the production and distribution of sales publications. Coordination with other United Nations system organizations is also facilitated by the work of the inter-agency Advisory Committee for the Coordination of Information Systems (ACCIS), which recently published the first edition of Books in Print of the United Nations system, listing over 10,000 titles available from all United Nations organizations.

IV. PREPARATION OF PUBLICATIONS

28. In its decision 45/451, entitled "Printing requirements of the United Nations", the General Assembly recommended that:

> "the current policies and practices of the United Nations should be continued so that maximum use would be made of internal printing capacities established to meet peak requirements for the production of parliamentary documentation at major conference centres, including the regional commissions, and that use of external printing services should be carefully controlled so as to ensure that such services would be procured on the most economic and efficient basis".

The printing plants at United Nations Headquarters, at the United Nations Office at Geneva and at the regional commissions have equipment and skilled staff capable of producing almost all United Nations publications, although sometimes external contract services are needed if the publication has specialized requirements or must be produced within short deadlines. The arrangements for printing at Headquarters are presently under review to ensure that the objectives of the above decision of the General Assembly are being met. The responsibility for procurement of external printing services has been transferred to the Office of General Services to be carried out as an integral part of the work of the Commercial, Purchase and Transportation Service.

V. DISSEMINATION OF PUBLICATIONS

A. Free distribution

29. Publications are distributed free of charge in accordance with general distribution policies set by the Publications Board and, where applicable, after consultation with the originating and/or responsible departments or offices, by surface mail or diplomatic pouch to ministries, embassies and other government addressees; intergovernmental organizations; non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status; specialized agencies; the regional commissions

and other United Nations offices; United Nations information centres; and United Nations depository libraries. Internal distribution lists are also established for publications; they include permanent missions; permanent observers; press; Secretariat staff; and meetings and conference-servicing requirements. The current distribution chart at United Nations Headquarters is contained in the appendix to the present report.

30. In addition to the free distribution to official recipients, substantive departments of the Secretariat also maintain lists for distribution of their publications to specifically targeted end-users. According to current guidelines, these lists may also include persons or bodies that have rendered specific service in the preparation of the publication, persons or organizations that are of continuing and substantial assistance to the work of the department, and persons of eminence in the field dealt with in the publication and whose interest it is considered important to enlist or retain. To avoid possible duplication with the list of official recipients and to ensure compliance with the criteria established by the Publications Board, all departmental lists are subject to examination by the Department of Public Information in consultation with the Office of Conference Services.

31. The review pointed to the need to rationalize the free distribution of publications and recommended that the Publications Board should establish limits to the number of copies of publications that could be distributed by author departments free of charge and guidelines for such free departmental distribution, so as to meet legitimate official needs for publications at the working level, while maintaining a potential for earning revenues through sales. The objectives of such guidelines should be to maximize sales and to minimize duplication in the distribution of documents. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that the United Nations has standard-setting responsibilities, and in certain cases, author departments have the responsibility to ensure that documents are made available free of charge to government ministries or offices that contributed to the preparation of the publication and need to use it in their work.

32. The review also recommended that there should be no official or free departmental distribution of sales publications that were previously issued as parliamentary documents. Free distribution of sales publications to NGOs should be limited to those organizations identified as targeted end-users by the author department concerned. These recommendations are under review by the Publications Board.

33. The number of copies of publications that are normally distributed to recipients is determined in accordance with a distribution chart established by the Publications Board. Language versions, when available, are provided according to the specific request of the recipient. Each year permanent missions are requested to review their requirements for the distribution of documents and publications. Publications sent to permanent missions are intended not only for the missions but for all interested ministries and government offices as well.

34. At Headquarters, a "Daily list of documents distributed at Headquarters" is compiled and issued by the Office of Conference Services so that its recipients can check the list of documents issued daily, ensure that what they receive is

in conformity with their requests, and request any documents that they do not receive in full series.

35. The Distribution Section of the Office of Conference Services at Headquarters or the equivalent unit at other duty stations will continue to be responsible for the initial distribution of United Nations publications. Although the Publishing Division of the Office of Conference Services has been abolished, the Office has retained responsibility for the distribution of documentation and publications.

36. Distribution lists, both official and departmental, are being computerized and will be reviewed and updated at more frequent intervals - perhaps annually - by author departments, the Office of Conference Services and the Department of Public Information.

37. During 1993, the Publications Board will revise Administrative Instruction ST/AI/189/Add.1/Rev.2 concerning the distribution of documents, meeting records, official records and publications, and in particular the distribution chart at Headquarters, contained in the appendix, with a view to reducing the number of copies of documents distributed.

38. The review recommended that for lengthy publications with extensive distribution, pre-packaging externally under contract should be considered. This recommendation was based upon an earlier proposal made by the Management Advisory Service during its review of the Office of Conference Services, that, with respect to the packaging and shipping functions, the option of contracting out the entire operations should be studied. Its costs and benefits should be compared with those of the in-house operations, bearing in mind that the latter could eventually benefit from the introduction of new technology and on-line automated equipment and methods, such as tipping in, insertion of coupons, addressing, sorting, bagging and boxing. The Publications Board endorsed the view that any decision to have the distribution of publications done externally under contract should be based upon a comparison with a computer-based internal operation. It did not favour having distribution of all publications and documents done externally without such a study.

B. Sales of United Nations publications

1. Criteria for selection of sales publications

39. The decision on whether or not a study should be published is made at two stages. First, if a programme seems likely to result in studies which would meet the established criteria for publications, tentative provision for publication is included in the programme budget. Secondly, when the study is completed, it is subject to critical review before it is certified by the department concerned as suitable for publication. The certification indicates the degree of interest likely to be shown by Governments, professional and academic groups and the general public.

40. At the second stage, a decision is made on whether the study is to be a sales or non-sales publication; not all publications are considered suitable for sale. The form of publication is a matter for administrative decision based on

considerations of economy and of estimated sales potential. Several cases may be distinguished:

(a) If the study is being issued as a document of an intergovernmental body, it is given general distribution, which in itself constitutes publication and assures the official distribution that separate publication would provide. Such a document is not normally reissued as a publication. Departmental and sales distribution to the extent required is provided for by run-on copies. In appropriate cases, covers and title pages or self covers are provided;

(b) If the study meets the criteria for publication but is not to be presented to an intergovernmental body, if the main purpose of publication is to bring the study to the attention of official and departmental recipients and if sales interest is expected to be minimal, then the study is issued as a non-sales item. The author unit assumes the main responsibility for getting the publication into the hands of the readership sought through departmental distribution;

(c) If the study is considered to have a substantial sales potential and if it meets the criteria for publication, it is issued as a United Nations publication with a sales number and sales price. If only a minimal sales interest is expected, the study is not normally issued as a sales publication;

(d) If the study meets the criteria for publication but is considered by the Sales Section to have a minimal sales potential, the possibility of external publication is considered.

41. The review of the publications policy found that the above criteria for the selection of sales publications continued to be appropriate. However, it was recognized that new mechanisms and/or procedures might enhance the process of reviewing manuscripts to ensure fulfilment of the above criteria, as well as those set out in General Assembly resolution 47/73 B. Moreover, the "minimal" sales figure would need to be established on a case-by-case basis. There should be no arbitrary minimum figure; the assessment of whether the number of copies expected to be sold is sufficient should take into consideration the nature of the publication, the characteristics of the market for such a publication and the proposed sales price.

2. Pricing policy

42. Paragraph .061 of section 11.06 of the United Nations Finance manual states that:

> "Through the sale of publications the United Nations makes available for general distribution documents, reports, books, periodicals, microforms and other published material at no cost to the Organization. The sales operation as a whole is intended to provide a profit to the Organization if this can be achieved without adversely affecting the dissemination of information to the public."

United Nations publications are issued primarily for official use and, as such, are distributed free of charge in varying quantities to Governments,

intergovernmental agencies, NGOs, information media, individual authorities on the subjects treated and to United Nations depository libraries. They are also made generally available on the grounds that the public has a right to know what is being said and done in its name and to use the information and ideas so disseminated.

43. Publications are not planned or issued primarily with a view to revenue. Nevertheless, mindful of recommendation 34 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations, 4/ the Publications Board has sought to establish a pricing policy that will maximize the revenue from the sale of publications to the extent consistent with ensuring their wide dissemination. Under the recently revised rules for the pricing of United Nations publications, prices are no longer based solely on printing costs, but also take into account other costs, such as marketing, design and editing, as well as market and industry circumstances and the quality and content of the publication, from the viewpoint of market appeal. To make United Nations publications more accessible to readers in developing countries, flexibility is also built into the revised pricing policy and consideration is given to currency exchange rates and other elements affecting their ability to pay.

3. Role of the Publications Board

44. Upon the recommendation of the Sales Section and the author department, the Publications Board decides which publications will be included in the publications programme and issued as sales publications. The Board also decides upon policies related to sales activities, including the criteria for the selection of sales publications and pricing policies. Special measures to promote a small number of publications with unusually good potential markets are also proposed.

4. Role of the Sales Section (New York/Geneva)

45. In close consultation with author departments, the Sales Section (at Headquarters or at Geneva) proposes publications for issuance as sales publications, identifies prospective markets for the publications and proposes print runs and languages of publication. In consultation with author departments and with graphic designers, the Sales Section proposes repackaging of documents as sales publications or the creation of new products as well as the design and production of covers for sales publications. Production and distribution of sales publications are monitored by the Sales Section.

46. The Sales Section is also responsible for the promotion and marketing of sales publications, payment of expenditures related to sales activities, accounting for costs of goods sold and for revenues from sales, as well as for the operation of the United Nations bookshop.

47. The review recommended that the Sales Section, in consultation with author departments, should conduct regular surveys to assess the value of United Nations sales publications to the target readerships. The results of such surveys should be made known to the Publications Board and to author departments

so as to enable both to utilize the information to improve their publications programme. As a pilot project, the Publications Board has requested the Sales Section and the Department of Public Information jointly to undertake an evaluation and market survey of the UN Chronicle. On the basis of the experience gained during this pilot project, systematic marketing studies will be made of other recurrent publications.

48. There is a need to strengthen the marketing activities of the Sales Section. The review of the Office of Conference Services carried out in 1992 recommended the following activities:

(a) Strengthening of the marketing and sales activities of the Publications Division and formulation of a three-year plan based on market analysis and readership surveys;

(b) Strengthening of the market research and evaluation function within the Sales Section with respect to the usefulness and effectiveness of publications. Departments should be encouraged to systematically assess the satisfaction of users as part of self-evaluation mechanisms;

(c) With an improved capacity to conduct marketing studies, providing valuable inputs in the initial planning stage of publications based on the requirements of target audiences and market demands, which would clearly help to enhance the saleability and marketability of products.

The Publications Board endorsed the above recommendations. They are being considered further in the context of the transfer of the Sales Section from the Office of Conference Services to the Office of General Services, in order to draw upon the experience of the Office of General Services and, in particular, of the United Nations Postal Administration.

5. Treatment of revenues from the sale of publications

49. The programme budget of the United Nations includes information on the estimates of gross revenues and expenditures from the sale of United Nations publications as well as the net revenue from the activity. The net revenue from the activity accrues as miscellaneous income to the Organization and is administered in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

50. As new markets for United Nations publications are identified, and as publishing activities expand to cover new products, there is a need to devote more resources to product development activities. While such activities can significantly increase prospects for revenues, the revenues may not be generated during the biennium in which product development expenditures are incurred. For this reason, during the review of publications policy and practice, consideration was given to the possibility of providing resources to finance publication activities not funded under available regular budget resources. Resources would be used to ensure that a portion of the proceeds from the sale of publications would be made available for product development and other activities that would increase sales revenue, such as the more active promotion of publications, increasing the dissemination of publications, improving the

quality of publications to enhance their market appeal, or improving the efficiency with which publications are prepared, processed, reproduced or distributed. The Publications Board agreed that it would be desirable to have resources provided for what might be termed "product development" activities relating to the preparation and promotion of new publications and assistance to author departments to make further improvements in already successful publications in order to improve prospects for revenue-generation. It proposed an increase in the regular budget provisions for the cost of goods sold to cover these developments, as well as promotional activities, in addition to the regular costs of producing goods for sale during the biennium.

C. External publishing activities

51. In order to achieve the widest possible dissemination, in as many languages as possible, of material relating to the work of the United Nations, external publishing arrangements in the form of co-publishing with, or the assignment of certain publishing rights to, external publishers - public or private - are considered when it appears likely that such arrangements will offer advantages to the Organization.

52. As a general rule, the United Nations publishes official records and well-established recurrent publications under its own imprint. However, proposals for external publishing, in whole or in part, are not excluded, if special circumstances can be adduced. Other texts, including those relating to special meetings or conferences, may also be proposed for external publication.

53. Within these general guidelines, proposals for an appropriate form of external publishing are considered for cases such as the following:

(a) Manuscripts not included in the approved United Nations publication programme and language editions of United Nations publications that the Organization does not plan to publish;

(b) Manuscripts in the approved United Nations publications programme, when it appears likely that some form of external publishing will achieve greater dissemination of information or economy of resources;

(c) Manuscripts developed from United Nations documentation expressly for the purpose of dissemination of information;

(d) Reprinting or publishing in other editions - whether in paper copy or in microform - to meet public demand.

54. Internal and external aspects of publishing are considered complementary and are, whenever possible, planned within the framework of annual programmes, rather than on a case-by-case basis. Pre-publication planning is undertaken at all levels, particularly by the author department. In consultation with the External Publications Officer, author departments review their proposed publishing plans and submit their recommendations for external publishing projects to the Publications Board, together with their proposed United Nations publications programme.

55. Proposals for external publishing are considered in the first instance by the Working Committee, which reports on them to the Publications Board. The Board decides on each proposal on its own merits, bearing in mind the following principles:

(a) The fulfilment by the Organization of its obligations for official distribution should not be inhibited;

(b) The financial self-sufficiency of the United Nations sales operation should not be impaired.

56. Experience has shown that there are cases in which a publication, even though not specifically mandated, might respond to a strong demand for information on a timely topic and thus generate revenues and bring other benefits to the Organization. In cooperation with author departments, the External Publications and Publishing Activities Office has in the past two years begun to develop publications to meet such demand and to cooperate with book packagers or book producers to undertake such projects outside the established publication programme. Similar to film producers in their operation, book packagers can carry out the full range of activities required to create and distribute a publication. On the basis of experience gained through pilot projects, procedures are being developed for using the services of book packagers to complement other external publishing activities and to create new titles for which there is a demand but for which regular budget resources are not available.

D. Copyright

57. In the past, the United Nations policy was, in general, not to seek copyright for United Nations publications, in order to facilitate the widest possible dissemination of their contents. However, experience over the years suggested a need to retain control over certain United Nations materials to ensure that they were used in the best interests of the Organization or to protect the revenues that might accrue from sales publications and that would be adversely affected by unauthorized, competitive commercial publications. Therefore, in 1987, the policy was revised on an experimental basis.

58. Certain categories of materials remain in the public domain. The United Nations does not seek copyright for them unless, prior to their issue and in exceptional circumstances, the Publications Board, in consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs, decides otherwise. These categories are as follows:

(a) Official records: a series of printed publications relating to the proceedings of organs or conferences of the United Nations;

(b) United Nations documents: written material officially issued under a United Nations document symbol, regardless of the form of production, although, in practice the term is applied mainly to material offset from typescript and issued under a masthead. The term also applies to written material issued simultaneously or sequentially in the form of documents and publications;

(c) Public information material: publications, periodicals, brochures, pamphlets, press releases, flyers, catalogues and other materials designed primarily to inform the public about United Nations activities. This does not include public information material that is offered for sale, which may be subject to copyright registration.

59. Copyright protection is, as a general rule, now sought for all recurrent publications, studies or reports issued under the authority of the Publications Board. In exceptional circumstances, author departments may seek the concurrence of the Publications Board to obtain copyright protection for a publication in one of the categories listed in paragraph 58 above. Copyright protection will not be sought for publications, the legislative authority for which contemplates the retention of the material in the public domain. The present experimental policy on copyright protection will be continued and adjusted as necessary to reflect developments of the law concerning the copyright of materials in electronic format.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

60. The restructuring of the publishing activities at Headquarters is expected to provide a new focus to the planning and implementation of the publications programme of the United Nations and to integrate it more closely with the other public information activities of the Organization. The Department of Public Information, rather than the Office of Conference Services, is now responsible for the planning and implementation of the publications programme and will bring its expertise to bear on the continuing analysis of the demand for publications and the effectiveness of publications in responding to that demand through a variety of evaluation techniques and contact with the public. The Office of General Services has taken over from the Office of Conference Services responsibility for all activities related to the sale of United Nations publications, as well as responsibility for the operation of the United Nations bookshop. It has also taken over responsibility for all contracting of external services related to the graphic design, typesetting, printing and binding of publications and documents as part of its overall responsibility for commercial services.

61. The reconstituted Publications Board in its review of the publications programme for 1994-1995 has been applying the modified criteria for publications set out above and seeking to take fully into account the concerns expressed during deliberations in the Committee on Information and in the General Assembly. It is hoped that the publications programme, as reflected in the programme budget proposals for the biennium 1994-1995, will fully respond to the requirements of Member States and will make a constructive contribution to the work of the Organization.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/46/7).

2/ Ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 32 (A/47/32).

3/ A/39/239.

4/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 49 (A/41/49).

Annex

DISTRIBUTION CHART AT HEADQUARTERS

RECIPIENTS	DOCUMENTS AND MEETING RECORDS				OFFICIAL RECORDS		UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS	
	General	Limited	Restricted	Provisional[a]	Verbatim records fascicles, annex fascicles, supplements, bound summary records	Bound verbatim records, bound annex fascicles	$A/^*$ publications with sales number except yearbooks	Yearbooks[b]
MINISTRIES, EMBASSIES AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ADDRESSEES	10[c]	0	0	0	10[c]	0	See note[d]	See note[d]
INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	5	0	0	0	5	0	1	1
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS — CATEGORY I	5	0	0	1 upon request	5	0	3	1
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS — CATEGORY II AND ROSTER	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
SPECIALIZED AGENCIES	25[e]	Upon request	Upon request	Upon request	25[e]	1	30	5
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA, UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT VIENNA, REGIONAL COMMISSIONS, UNEP, UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, UNCTAD AND UNU	IAWR	Reference copies only	Reference copies only	Upon request	IAWR	5	IAWR	IAWR
INFORMATION CENTRES	IAWR	0	0	Upon request	IAWR	1	IAWR	IAWR
DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
PERMANENT MISSIONS	IAWR	IAWR[f]	IAWR[g]	IAWR	IAWR	1	30[d]	5[d]
PERMANENT OBSERVERS	5[h]	See note[f]	0	Upon request	5	1	5	2
PRESS	IAWR	Reference copies only	0	Upon request from DPI	IAWR	1	IAWR	Reference copy only
SECRETARIAT, HEADQUARTERS	IAWR	See note[i]	IAWR	IAWR	IAWR	Reference copies	IAWR	IAWR
MEETING SERVICE AND CONFERENCE REQUIREMENTS	IAWR	IAWR	IAWR	IAWR	IAWR	0	IAWR	IAWR
SALES	See note[k]	0	0	0	IAWR	IAWR	IAWR	IAWR
STOCK	IAWR	Minimum	Retained by departments	Minimum	IAWR	Minimum	IAWR	IAWR

IAWR - In accordance with requirements.

[a] Except in cases where distribution is explicitly limited to participants in a given meeting.

[b] Excluding the *Yearbook of the United Nations*.

[c] A maximum of 25 copies may be provided upon written request.

[d] The number of copies given for permanent missions represents the combined total entitlement for permanent missions, ministries and other governmental agencies.

[e] Additional copies up to a maximum of 25 copies of specific documents and official records may be provided on request.

[f] A maximum of 10 copies may be provided to the members of the body concerned.

[g] Does not pertain to the "Restricted" documents withheld from regular distribution by the body concerned.

[h] More copies may be provided upon written request.

[i] Observers participating in the work of the body concerned may receive up to three copies.

[j] As certified by the executive officer of each department or office.

[k] Only to paid subscribers for designated series.